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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9332
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2072
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0162
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0172
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0645
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0461
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0169
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0328
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0547
RUEHVN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2467
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1854
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000396

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KG

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ DEMONSTRATIONS: TWO COMPETING VIEWS FROM PARLIAMENT

REF: A. BISHKEK 384
1B. BISHKEK 386
1C. BISHKEK 389

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Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Meeting separately with the Ambassador April 11, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Parliament provided widely varying analyses of the opposition-led demonstrations beginning today in Bishkek. Speaker Sultanov told the Ambassador he thought the protests would be peaceful, and there would be no provocations from the government side. He said that the draft constitution prepared by Prime Minister Atambayev's working group was the key to moving forward. Sultanov criticized the opposition for its "absurd" demands and pressure tactics. Deputy Speaker Isabekov, on the other hand, warned of civil unrest due to certain provocations. Isabekov criticized the working group's draft constitution and was pessimistic that there would be progress toward a new constitution. End Summary.

"DON'T WORRY, EVERYTHING WILL BE OK"

12. (C) During an April 11 meeting with Ambassador, Speaker of Parliament Marat Sultanov gave assurances that the demonstrations would be peaceful and without provocation by the government. Sultanov discounted rumors that pro-Bakiyev demonstrators were being organized to challenge the opposition protesters, and said that Nurlan Motuyev, a noted thug and rabble-rouser released from custody on the eve of the demonstrations, would not be a factor.

MOVING FORWARD (SLOWLY) WITH NEW CONSTITUTION

¶13. (C) Sultanov said that the draft constitution produced by Prime Minister Atambayev's working group represented the best way forward. He said that it was based on the current ("December version") constitution, with slight modifications to incorporate some of the opposition's demands. Sultanov, who was a drafter of the December version of the constitution, said the new draft provisions would increase the parliament from 75 to 105 members, but protect current deputies from early elections. Also, under the new draft, parliament would form the cabinet. Sultanov said that the new draft would first be considered by the parliament's committee on constitutional law, perhaps as soon as April 16.

After review in committee, the draft would go to the constitutional court for review. (Note: Sultanov did not mention that the constitutional court currently lacks a quorum and parliament has failed to act on the two judges nominated to fill the vacancies. End note.) Sultanov said that the draft would be taken up by the full parliament following the constitutional court's review. (Note: This is contrary to our understanding of the adoption process for constitutional laws. End Note.)

CRITICAL OF OPPOSITION

¶14. (C) Sultanov said that United Front leader Felix Kulov had had ample time to resolve the situation but now had left himself with no way out. Sultanov believed that Kulov has been grossly misinformed about support for the opposition in the south and that southerners would rally around Bakiyev. He argued that President Bakiyev had offered a compromise but that the opposition showed no interest in a dialogue, and he

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criticized Kulov's use of ultimatums and the threat of violence to achieve radical demands. Sultanov also criticized the draft constitutional law put forward by the opposition (see Ref C) as "invalid and undemocratic." He said that timing provisions in the draft were "absurd," and he further noted that offering deputies the opportunity to hold cabinet positions and parliamentary seats simultaneously would never work.

ISABEKOV WARNS OF VIOLENCE

¶15. (C) In a separate meeting April 11, Deputy Speaker Kubanychbek Isabekov presented the Ambassador a very different view of the demonstrations and draft constitution. Isabekov grimly foretold of violence and certain provocation, warning that while April 11 was a day of administrative organization and the gathering of the masses, April 12 would be "the most dangerous day" and could be the beginning of great civil unrest. He said that female parliamentary staff members were urged to go home early, that building security was heightened, and that, although he and Sultanov had vowed to "stay to the end," there would be duty vehicles to whisk them away should the situation quickly deteriorate. Even though students had been threatened with expulsion should they participate in the demonstrations, Isabekov said that there was money available to draw the youths into the streets. He also noted the presence of "unknown forces" in camouflage around the city center, but did not elaborate.

¶16. (C) Isabekov told Ambassador that he was not in favor of Atambayev's draft of the constitution, remarking that the president should not be given the authority to name all court judges. He said that Kulov and Bakiyev never worked together while they were a part of the "tandem" and would certainly not come to a compromise now. He also noted that the constitutional court, lacking two judges, was not functional and could not assess any new constitutions proposed.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) The differing predictions of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker show just how uncertain the situation is as the demonstrations get underway. Sultanov, who played a key role in mediating the November demonstrations, was clearly in the pro-Bakiyev camp this time. He is, however, in the best position to assess how the parliament will deal with the competing draft constitutions, and this will likely, once again, be central to reaching a compromise.

YOVANOVITCH